

Chairman Monson and House Government Operations Appropriations Committee members. I am here on behalf of the 4-H Extension to speak on the request for operating funds for North Dakota Extension.

North Dakota Extension and 4-H has been a major part of my life from a very young age, and one of the things I appreciate most are the relational experiences I have because of 4-H. I have built and maintained many friendships, and I know the same can be said for my siblings and my parents. On an individual level, one of the things I appreciate is that I have been able to maintain relationships on a generational level with the children of my parents' 4-H peers. The parents of my friend Alex Lahlum were both Ambassadors with my dad, and then, as we both come from large families, our siblings followed in the footsteps of our parents and were also friends with each other. And even though our families have always lived in different parts of the state, we have maintained our relationship through 4-H. I know similar experiences to be true for many of my other friends, and I believe those connections are very unique to 4-H. 4-H Extension is very community oriented, and it is focussed heavily on community improvement, while also highlighting and supporting one's individual growth. 4-H Extension, specifically through their youth development and leadership programs has helped me in countless ways. When looking at all the achievements in my life I realize that much of what has helped me to be successful has been the skills that I have gained from 4-H. I believe one of the most important skills I need to prepare me for a future career is the ability to work well with other people, and I wholeheartedly believe that 4-H has helped me and helps many other youth to obtain this essential skill and many other important skills. The communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork skills I have gained from being involved in 4-H events and being a 4-H Ambassador, I use every day, and being able to use these skills in collaboration with my peers and their unique and

individual skills, I feel that I have been a part of strengthening the community within 4-H and within North Dakota. A 4-H event that I have been involved in every year from the time I was 8 years old is the Communication Arts Contest; a contest that helps and highlights the communication skills of the participants. Without being able to participate in this event there are many aspects of my life I believe I would not have been as successful in. I have done well competing in high school speech and I have learned how to speak clearly and confidently in front of people. Without 4-H's impact on my life I wouldn't have those skills or successes and probably would not be comfortable even standing here and testifying on this bill. I'm confident that the same can be said for most 4-H members, which is why it's so important for these events and programs to be available to North Dakota youth.

Your support will allow these events to continue being easily accessible. One of the great things about 4-H is that it has always been affordable. Many other programs for youth have many costs associated with them but 4-H has kept their expenses at a minimum, making it accessible to all youth in North Dakota. This is only because of the support that we receive, which is why I thank you for your past support and encourage you to continue your support of Extension and approve the request for operating funds for North Dakota Extension. Thank you.